

THE GREAT TREATISE
on the
STAGES OF THE PATH
TO ENLIGHTENMENT



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LAM RIM CHEN MO

TSONG-KHA-PA

THE LAMRIM CHENMO TRANSLATION COMMITTEE

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This One



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DEDICATION

*We dedicate this translation to
His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama
and the people of Tibet.*

EDITOR'S PREFACE

This book is the second volume in a three-volume translation of the *Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment* (*Byang chub lam rim che ba*). It brings to a conclusion a project initiated by the Tibetan Buddhist Learning Center (TBLC) in 1992. Volume one was published by Snow Lion Publications in 2000 and volume three in 2002. Just as the location of this volume between the other two indicates, this middle volume is the heart of the *Great Treatise*. It covers the spirit of enlightenment (*bodhicitta*; *byang chub kyi sems*) and the deeds of the bodhisattvas, the great beings whose deeds are motivated by this altruistic spirit.

The Lamrim Chenmo Translation Committee has followed the same procedure and format that was used for volumes one and three, except for giving in the notes on the citations the Sanskrit reference and Tohoku catalogue (Ui et al. 1934) reference (identified by the abbreviation D) as supplied by Tsultrim Kelsang Khangkar's critical edition of the Tibetan text. The committee members who worked on this volume were Natalie M. Hauptman, Gareth Sparham, Daniel Cozort, and John Makransky. These translators again used the Tso-ngön (mTsho-sngon) edition of the *Lam rim chen mo* published in Zi-ling by Tso Ngön People's Press in 1985 (bracketed numbers appear throughout this work). They also referred to the commentary *Four Interwoven Annotations* (*Lam rim mchan bzhi sbrags ma*) and used it consistently to interpret citations. The editors again had the invaluable assistance of the eminent contemporary Tibetan Buddhist scholars Denma Lochö Rimbochay and Loling Geshe Yeshe Tapkay to read through the text and discuss difficult passages. Over the twelve years of this project the editors

have come to appreciate what rare and precious treasures these two persons are.

While I was working on this translation project, I was often under the illusion that I was doing everything myself. However, as mentioned in this book, the distinction between self and other is not as sharp as we naturally think. Therefore, I would like to acknowledge the great contributions of others who have been as essential as myself in bringing this project to completion. In the prefaces to the other two *Great Treatise* volumes I have already thanked many people, and I hold their continued help in highest esteem. Yet I would be remiss if I did not give special thanks to a number of people whose contributions were especially beneficial to me over the past two years it took to complete this final volume.

I especially express my deepest gratitude to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, my constant source of inspiration for this work. His Holiness's activities embody the lofty ideals described in this book, such that he is the light of hope for those who desire peace in this strife-torn world. In response to my request His Holiness has said that He will give teachings at TBLC on the entire *Great Treatise*, and I pray that this great honor can soon become a reality. I am also continually grateful to my guru the late Geshe Ngawang Wangyal, whose profound effect upon my life has made him an ever-present source of support. As always, I greatly appreciate the efforts of the above-mentioned translators and Tibetan scholars. I would like to mention the two Tibetan scholars in particular. Geshe Yeshe Tapkay first proposed this project to me and has subsequently given his invaluable assistance without hesitation. Denma Lochö Rimbochay has given me constant guidance and support. I am most indebted to the great kindness they both have shown me. Among the translators I especially appreciate all the extra efforts of Gareth Sparham, who edited the original manuscript, entered all the citation notes, and put together the bibliography. I am also very grateful to Guy Newland, whose cogent suggestions brought clarity to the translation. I am also thankful to Gray Tuttle and Brady Whitton for their thoughtful editing suggestions. And I am most grateful to Snow Lion editor Susan Kyser for all her kind efforts at doing a very careful job to avoid any discrepancies in the text. In addition, I thank Snow Lion's Steven Rhodes for bibliographic help, and Jeff Cox and Sidney Piburn for their support and encouragement.

Also I would like to extend my great appreciation to all the family, friends, students, and supporters of TBLC who have given from

their hearts to make this work possible: to my parents, Eric and Nancy Cutler, whose inestimable kindness I can never repay; to Buff and Johnnie Chace and their son, Ben, for their valued friendship and financial support; to my other friends and supporters—Alexander Levchuk, Martha Keys, Pierroluigi Squillante, Mukesh and Sepna Sehgal, Sharon Cohen, Frank and Raksha Weber, Chip and Susan Carlin, Harvey Aronson and Anne C. Klein, Elizabeth S. Napper, Thao and Gai Nguyen, Al Bellini, Victoria Jenks, Jim and Bonnie Onembo, Nick and Shelley Guarriello, Pence and Joanie Ziegler, David and Victoria Urubshurow, Frank and Khady Lusby, Jane Bullis, Jim Mershon, Vera Krivoshein, Sally Ward, Chot and Armen Elliott, and Louise Duhaime; to some of the TBLC students for their support—Amy and John Miller, Jennifer Collins, and Thomas Santomartino; and to the TBLC doctors—Peter Beskyd, James Goodwin, Frank Viverette, Jerry Cohen, David and Ming Ming Molony, Davis Smith and Kendra Lawrence, and Robert Blease.

There is one person whose collaboration on this project has made everything possible. The nature of my responsibilities at TBLC are such that I would not have been able to put my fingers on the keyboard if it were not for my wife, Diana. Since the inception of this project, she has selflessly shouldered more and more of the duties that keep TBLC running smoothly, as well as helped me on this translation project whenever needed. Over the twelve years of this project it has been very difficult for me to keep on track, and it has only been possible because of Diana's deep dedication to our guru Geshe Wangyal's vision, her boundless energy and enthusiasm, a consistent ability to put her own interests second, and a very practical intelligence. Just as an infant grows up in dependence upon the affection and support of its mother, so Diana has been the mother of this translation. For this I am eternally grateful.

Joshua W.C. Cutler
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Such is the nature of persons of great capacity, who lack any self-interest;
They are consumed with whatever brings happiness and benefit to the world.

One who sees beings tormented by the above-mentioned suffering and who hastens to act for their welfare is called a “person of great capacity” and an “adept.” [283] The same text says:⁵

Those who see beings disturbed by the smoke cloud of ignorance that enshrouds the world,
Helplessly fallen into the blazing fire of suffering,
And hastily make effort as if their own heads were on fire
Are here called “great persons” and “adepts.”

Therefore, the Mahāyāna is the origin of all the good of self and others; the medicine that alleviates all troubles; the great path traveled by all knowledgeable persons; nourishment for all beings who see, hear, remember, and come into contact with it; and that which has the great skill-in-means that engages you in others’ welfare and thereby indirectly achieves your own welfare in its entirety. One who enters it thinks, “Wonderful! I have found what I am looking for.” Enter this supreme vehicle with all of the “strength of an excellent person” that you have. The *Compendium of the Perfections* states:⁶

This supreme vehicle is realized by genuine wisdom.
From it the omniscience of the Great Sage arises.
He is like the eye of the world,
His radiance like the rays of the rising sun.

Thus, enter the Mahāyāna after you have developed great respect for it induced by seeing its good qualities from various perspectives.

3) Training the mind in the stages of the path for persons of great capacity

Training the mind in the stages of the path for persons of great capacity is presented in three sections:

1. Showing that developing the spirit of enlightenment is the only entrance to the Mahāyāna
2. How to develop the spirit of enlightenment (Chapters 1-6)
3. How to learn the bodhisattva deeds after developing the spirit of enlightenment (Chapters 7 and on)

of the *śrāvaka* and *pratyekabuddha*. They do not lose the name “bodhisattva,” and they still remove all the poverty of cyclic existence.

Also the protector Nāgārjuna in his *Precious Garland* (*Ratnāvali*) says:⁹

If you and the world
Wish to obtain unexcelled enlightenment,
Its root is the spirit of enlightenment,
Firm as the king of mountains.

Further, the *Tantra Bestowing the Initiation of Vajrapāṇi* (*Vajrapāṇy-abhiṣeka-mahā-tantra*) says:¹⁰

“O great bodhisattva, Mañjuśrī, this tantric maṇḍala is exceedingly secret, unfathomable, very profound, and vast. It is unsuitable to teach it to sinful beings.” [285]

“Vajrapāṇi, you say this maṇḍala is very rare. Since I have not heard about it, to whom should it be explained?”

Vajrapāṇi replied, “O Mañjuśrī, once those who have entered meditation on the spirit of enlightenment have attained it, Mañjuśrī, these bodhisattvas who practice the bodhisattva deeds—the door to tantra—should enter into the tantric maṇḍala of the great sublime wisdom initiation. However, those who have not fully attained the spirit of enlightenment should not enter it. They should not even enter and see the maṇḍala. Moreover, do not teach them the gestures and mantras.”

Therefore it is not sufficient that the teaching be a Mahāyāna teaching; it is crucial that the person be a Mahāyāna practitioner. Furthermore, functioning as a Mahāyāna practitioner depends solely on realizing the spirit of enlightenment. Hence, if you have only an intellectual understanding of this spirit, then you likewise have only an intellectual understanding of what it means to be a Mahāyāna practitioner. If the spirit is completely perfect, then the Mahāyāna practitioner is genuine, so strive for this.

In regard to this the *Array of Stalks Sūtra* (*Gaṇḍa-vyūha-sūtra*) says:¹¹

O child of good lineage, the spirit of enlightenment is like the seed of all the buddha qualities.

Because you must fully comprehend this statement, I will explain it. When water, manure, warmth, earth, etc., combine with a rice seed, they act as the causes of the rice sprout. If they combine with the seeds of wheat, peas, etc., they act as the causes of these types

Is there any virtue equal to this?
Is there any such friend?
Is there any such merit?

And also:

I bow down to the body of anyone
Who has generated this sacred jewel of the mind. [288]

And:

It is the quintessential butter
Churned from the milk of the sublime teaching.

Thus the spirit of enlightenment is the supreme instruction, extracting the quintessence of the scriptures.

Therefore, although the glorious Atisha held the Madhyamaka view and his teacher Ser-ling-ba (gSer-gling-pa) held the Satyākāravādin view,¹⁷ Atisha attained the spirit of enlightenment by depending on him and therefore took him to be the kindest of his gurus. If those who know the core of the scriptures look at this part of Atisha's biography, they will gain a great understanding of a key point of the path.

If you generate this spirit in an uncontrived manner after making much effort, you will be imbued with the spirit of enlightenment and then even giving a tiny morsel of food to a crow will be considered a bodhisattva deed. However, if you lack this spirit, even offering a universe of three billion world systems filled with jewels will not be considered a bodhisattva deed. Likewise, actions such as the perfections from ethical discipline through wisdom, as well as meditation on yourself as a deity and meditation on the channels, winds, drops, etc., will also not be considered bodhisattva deeds.

If your precious spirit has not actualized the key point of the practice, no matter how long you try to cultivate virtue, you will not accomplish much. It is like cutting grass with a very dull sickle. If your spirit of enlightenment has actualized the key point of the practice, however, it is like cutting the grass and sharpening the sickle—even when you are not cutting the grass, you will be sharpening the sickle, and when you set to cutting, you cut a large amount even in a short time. Likewise, with this fully actualized spirit of enlightenment, in each instant you are able to easily clear away

obscurations and accumulate the collections of merit and sublime wisdom. Even small virtues become extensive, and those that would otherwise be lost after a certain period of time do not end. *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds* states:¹⁸

The force of sin is great and extremely intense;
Besides the spirit of perfect enlightenment,
What virtue can overcome it?

And also:

Like the fire at the end of an eon,
It will instantly consume grave sins. [289]

And also:

If even those who think, “I’ll clear away
Just the headaches of living beings,”
Have such a beneficial intention
That they receive immeasurable merit,

Then what is there to say
Of one who aspires to clear away
The immeasurable unhappiness of each being
And to endow each with immeasurable good qualities?

And also:

All other virtues are like the plantain tree—
After bearing fruit they perish.
But this spirit of enlightenment, like a wish-granting tree,
Always bears fruit and never dies, but flourishes.

b) How to develop the spirit of enlightenment

How to develop the spirit of enlightenment is explained in four parts:

1. How the spirit of enlightenment depends on certain causes to arise
2. The stages of training in the spirit of enlightenment (Chapters 2-4)
3. The measure of producing the spirit of enlightenment (Chapter 4)
4. How to adopt the spirit of enlightenment through its ritual (Chapters 5-6)

i) How the spirit of enlightenment depends on certain causes to arise

How the spirit of enlightenment depends on certain causes to arise is explained in three parts:

1. The development of the spirit through the four conditions
2. The development of the spirit through the four causes
3. The development of the spirit through the four strengths

a' The development of the spirit through the four conditions

1. You develop the spirit of enlightenment either by seeing for yourself the inconceivable power of buddhas or bodhisattvas, or by hearing about them from a reliable person, and then thinking, "This enlightenment in which they abide or which they pursue is very powerful."

2. Although you may not have seen or heard of such power in this way, you can develop the spirit by listening to the scriptural collections which take unsurpassed enlightenment as a point of departure, and then aspiring to the sublime wisdom of a buddha.

3. Although you may not have heard the teachings, you can develop the spirit by understanding that the excellent teaching of the bodhisattvas is about to disappear, and then thinking, "I will definitely develop the spirit of enlightenment so that the bodhisattva teaching will remain for a long time, because the existence of such teaching removes suffering from innumerable living beings."

4. Although you have not seen the decline of the teaching, you think, "It is difficult to generate the spirit of enlightenment of even a *śrāvaka* or *pratyekabuddha* in these terrible times in which there is a preponderance of ignorance, shamelessness, lack of embarrassment, jealousy, stinginess, and the like. Then what need is there to mention developing the spirit of highest enlightenment? If I were, at some point, to develop the spirit of enlightenment, others would surely follow." Thus, you generate the spirit of enlightenment through seeing the difficulty required to develop it. [290]

Concerning *how* the spirit of enlightenment arises from these four conditions, it is said that they inspire you to attain great enlightenment, so a desire to attain enlightenment arises. The ways in which this happens are as follows:

1. After you see or hear about supernatural powers, you are awed, thinking, "I will attain such an enlightenment," and then generate the spirit of enlightenment.

but continue to work for the welfare of beings as long as space remains. For, without compassion buddhas would be like *śrāvakas*. Kamalaśīla's second *Stages of Meditation* says:²⁵

Since the *bhagavan* buddhas are imbued with great compassion they remain until the end of the realm in which beings dwell, even though they have attained the complete perfection of their own aims.

And also:

The sole cause of the non-abiding nirvāṇa of the *bhagavans* is great compassion.

The glorious Candrakīrti taught that just as seeds, water, and ripening are important in the beginning, middle, and end of a harvest, similarly compassion is important in the beginning, middle, and end of the harvest of buddhahood. His *Commentary on the "Middle Way"* (*Madhyamakāvatāra*) states:²⁶

Compassion alone is regarded as the seed of a conqueror's
excellent harvest,
As water for its development,
And as the maturation in a state of long enjoyment.
Therefore at the beginning I praise compassion. [295]

With this powerful idea in view, the *Compendium of the Teachings Sūtra* (*Dharma-saṃgīti-sūtra*) says:²⁷

Bhagavan, bodhisattvas should not learn many teachings. Bhagavan, if bodhisattvas grasp and know one teaching, they will have all of the Buddha's teachings in the palm of their hand. What is this one teaching? It is great compassion.

Bhagavan, with great compassion all the Buddha's teachings are in the bodhisattvas' palm. For example, Bhagavan, wherever the precious wheel of a universal sovereign is, there also is the assembly of his battalions. Likewise, Bhagavan, wherever the bodhisattvas' great compassion is, there are all the Buddha's teachings. For example, Bhagavan, once there is a life force, all the other sensory faculties will exist. Bhagavan, similarly, once great compassion exists, all the other bodhisattvas' qualities will appear.

Once you become convinced that compassion is the excellent key to the path through such proof as reason and limitless scriptures, why would you not hold the spirit of enlightenment together with its root—compassion—to be the supreme instruction? The teacher Shang-na-chung (Zhang-sna-chung) said, "Even though I asked for

instructions from the Great Elder [Atisha], he said nothing except: 'Renounce the world; cultivate the spirit of enlightenment.'" Upon hearing this, Geshe Drom-dön-ba (dGe-bshes 'Brom-ston-pa-rgyal-ba'i-'byung-gnas) was embarrassed for him and said, "You received the Great Elder's ultimate instruction!" Geshe Drom-dön-ba understood the core of the teaching.

This conviction is very difficult to achieve, so you must seek a stable and certain knowledge by repeatedly clearing away sins, accumulating merit, and reading scriptures such as the *Array of Stalks Sūtra* and the commentaries. The glorious Mātṛceṭa's *Praise in One Hundred and Fifty Verses* (*Śata-pañcāśatka-stotra*) says:²⁸

Only you, O hero [Buddha], know your precious spirit,
The seed of perfect enlightenment,
To be the quintessence;
No one else can reach this certainty. [296]

b" How the six other personal instructions are either causes or effects of compassion

The explanation of how the six other personal instructions are either causes or effects of compassion has two parts:

1. How the first four personal instructions—recognition of all living beings as your mothers through the development of love—act as causes of compassion
2. How wholehearted resolve and the spirit of enlightenment are the effects of compassion

1" How the first four personal instructions—recognition of all living beings as your mothers through the development of love—act as causes of compassion

In general, if you repeatedly consider the sufferings of living beings, you of course develop a simple desire to free them from suffering. However, to develop this attitude easily, strongly, and firmly, you must first cherish these beings and have affection for them. For, at present you cannot bear for your friends to suffer; you are pleased with your enemies' suffering; and you are indifferent to the suffering of persons toward whom you have neutral feelings, who are neither enemies nor friends.

You have the first attitude because you are fond of your friends. Commensurate with your cherishing of them, you cannot bear for them to suffer. When you cherish friends to a small or medium degree, you are only able to bear their suffering slightly. When you

cherish friends a great deal, you clearly cannot bear for them to suffer at all, even if they suffer just a little.

When you see enemies suffer, not only do you *not* develop a desire to free them from it, but you also think, “May they not be free from suffering and suffer even more.” This is due to your lack of affection for them. Your lack of affection for enemies is commensurate with your pleasure at their suffering.

Being neither unable to bear nor pleased with the sufferings of persons toward whom you have neutral feelings results from your having neither affection nor lack of affection for them.

Consequently, in order to have affection for living beings, cultivate the view that they are close to you, like friends or relatives. Since your mother is the closest person to you, cultivate a recognition of all beings as your mothers. Also, recollect their kindness as your mothers and develop the wish to repay their kindness. These three steps are how you learn to cherish and have affection for living beings. The result of these three steps is a love that considers living beings to be beloved, just as a mother considers her only child. This love gives rise to compassion. [297]

The causal relationship between compassion and the love that is the wish for beings to have happiness is not definite. These three objectives—recognizing all beings as your mothers, recollecting their kindness, and wishing to repay this kindness—are the basis for both the love that wishes beings to have happiness and the compassion that wishes them to be free from suffering, so you must make effort to cultivate these three. The masters Candrakīrti, Candragomin, and Kamalaśīla explained that cultivating the view that living beings are your friends or relatives is the cause of developing the spirit of enlightenment.

2” How wholehearted resolve and the spirit of enlightenment are the effects of compassion

Qualm: Once you develop compassion through a gradual training of the mind, you generate the desire to attain buddhahood for the sake of all living beings. This should be enough. Why is it necessary to have the step of developing wholehearted resolve in between developing compassion and generating the spirit of enlightenment?

Reply: Although *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* have the immeasurable love and compassion whereby they think, “If only beings could have happiness and be free from suffering,” these non-Mahāyāna followers do not think, “I will take on the responsibility

3

THE SEVEN CAUSE-AND-EFFECT PERSONAL INSTRUCTIONS

2' The gradual training

a'' Training the mind to be intent on others' welfare

1'' Establishing the basis for developing this attitude

(a) Achieving impartiality toward living beings

(b) Having affection for all beings

(i) Cultivating a recognition that all beings are your mothers

(ii) Cultivating a remembrance of their kindness

(iii) Cultivating the wish to repay your mothers' kindness

2'' The development of the attitude of being intent on others' welfare

(a) The cultivation of love

(b) The cultivation of compassion

(c) The cultivation of wholehearted resolve

b'' Training the mind to be intent on enlightenment

c'' Identifying the spirit of enlightenment, the fruit of the training



2' The gradual training

The gradual training has three sections:

1. Training the mind to be intent on others' welfare
2. Training the mind to be intent on enlightenment
3. Identifying the spirit of enlightenment, the fruit of the training

You and others are always subject to sorrow—
All beings have similar sufferings.

Although it is said that it is improper to look for others' faults and that it is wonderful to notice even a single virtue, here it is appropriate to consider how others are helpless.

2" The development of the attitude of being intent on others' welfare

The development of the attitude of being intent on others' welfare has three parts:

1. The cultivation of love
2. The cultivation of compassion
3. The cultivation of wholehearted resolve

(a) The cultivation of love

In order to understand the cultivation of love you must know the following topics. *The object of love* is living beings who do not have happiness. *The subjective aspects* are thinking, "How nice it would be if beings were happy," "May they be happy," and "I will cause them to be happy." [305]

With respect to the benefits of love, the *King of Concentrations Sūtra* (*Samādhi-rāja-sūtra*) states:⁴²

Always offering to superior beings
As many countless offerings
As there are in billions of lands does not equal
A portion of the benefit of a loving attitude.

It says that the benefit of love has far greater merit than continually making vast offerings to the highest recipients [buddhas and bodhisattvas]. Also, the *Array of Qualities in Mañjuśrī's Buddha-realm* (*Mañjuśrī-buddha-kṣetra-guṇa-vyūha-sūtra*) states:⁴³

In the northeast is the land of the Conqueror Buddhēśvara called "Decorated by a Thousand Universes." There living beings have a happiness which is like the bliss of a monk who experiences a cessation. If you generate a loving attitude here in Jambudvīpa toward all living beings for merely a snap of the fingers, the merit produced greatly surpasses the merit gained by keeping pure conduct there for one trillion years. Is there any need to mention the merit of abiding in a loving attitude both day and night?

Moreover, Nāgārjuna's *Precious Garland* states:⁴⁴

(b) The cultivation of compassion

In order to understand the cultivation of compassion you must know the following topics. *The object of compassion* is living beings who experience misery through any of the three kinds of suffering. *The subjective aspects* are thinking, “How nice it would be if living beings were free from suffering,” “May they be free from suffering,” and “I will cause them to be free from suffering.” *The steps of cultivating compassion* are first to cultivate it toward friends, then toward those beings for whom you have neutral feelings, and next toward enemies. When you have equal compassion for your enemies and friends, cultivate it gradually toward all living beings in the ten directions.

Kamalaśīla, following the discourses on knowledge, set out this way of gradually cultivating impartiality, love, and compassion while distinguishing specific objects of meditation.⁴⁶ It is an extremely important point. If you train in these attitudes of impartiality, love, and compassion without distinguishing and taking up specific objects of meditation, but only using a general object from the outset, you will just seem to generate these attitudes. Then, when you try to apply them to specific individuals, you will not be able to actually generate these attitudes toward anyone. But once you have a transformative experience toward an individual in your meditation practice as explained previously, you may then gradually increase the number of individuals you visualize within your meditation. Finally, take all beings in general as your object of meditation. [307] When you sustain this practice in meditation, you will generate these attitudes correctly, whether you are dealing with individuals or a group.

The way to cultivate compassion is as follows. Consider how these living beings—your mothers—experience general and specific sufferings after falling into cyclic existence. I explained these sufferings earlier.⁴⁷ Moreover, if you have developed an awareness of your own general and specific suffering by training in the path of a person of medium capacity, you will assess your own situation and cultivate compassion toward others. By following this method, you will easily generate compassion. Considering your own suffering creates the determination to be free. Thinking about others’ suffering creates compassion. However, if you do not first consider your own suffering, you will not reach the key point of the practice.

These are simple illustrations of how to meditate. Intelligent persons should meditate in detail on the one hundred and ten

Similarly the learned should understand the division
Of these two in accordance with this sequence.

Although there are many disagreements about what these two are, know that the aspiration is either “May I become a buddha” or “I will become a buddha” for the sake of all beings and that as long as you have not taken the [bodhisattva] vows it is the aspirational spirit that is present, whether or not you are training in the deeds of generosity, etc. Once you have taken the vows, the spirit present is the engaged spirit of enlightenment. The first *Stages of Meditation* states:⁶¹

The aspirational spirit of enlightenment is the initial intent, “May I become a buddha in order to benefit all beings.” The engaged spirit is present once you have taken the vows and engaged in accumulating the collections of merit and sublime wisdom.

There are many arguments over this, but I will not elaborate on them here. [312]

4

EXCHANGING SELF AND OTHER

- b' The training based on the teachings of the conquerors' child Śāntideva
 - 1' Contemplating the benefits of exchanging self and other and the faults of not exchanging self and other
 - 2' The ability to exchange self and other if you accustom yourself to the thought of doing so
 - 3' The stages of meditating on how to exchange self and other
- iii) The measure of producing the spirit of enlightenment



b' The training based on the teachings of the conquerors' child Śāntideva

The training based on the teachings of the conquerors' child Śāntideva has three parts:

1. Contemplating the benefits of exchanging self and other and the faults of not exchanging self and other
2. The ability to exchange self and other if you accustom yourself to the thought of doing so
3. The stages of meditating on how to exchange self and other

1' Contemplating the benefits of exchanging self and other and the faults of not exchanging self and other

Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:⁶²

Whoever wishes to quickly protect
Self and other
Must exchange self for other.
Practice this excellent secret.

One who wishes to enter the door of the Mahāyāna teachings
Should develop through effort over eons
The spirit of enlightenment, which is like the sun that clears
 away darkness
And the moon that quells the torment of heat. [320]

iii) **The measure of producing the spirit of enlightenment**⁷⁸

Understand the measure of producing the spirit of enlightenment
as previously explained.⁷⁹

5

THE RITUAL FOR ADOPTING THE SPIRIT OF ENLIGHTENMENT

- iv) How to adopt the spirit of enlightenment through its ritual
 - a' Attaining that which you have not attained
 - 1' The person before whom you adopt the spirit of enlightenment
 - 2' The persons who adopt the spirit of enlightenment
 - 3' How to take part in the ritual of adopting the spirit of enlightenment
 - a'' The preparation for the ritual
 - 1'' Performing the special practice of going for refuge
 - (a) After decorating the place of the ritual and setting up representations of the three jewels, arranging the offerings
 - (b) Supplications and going for refuge
 - (c) Stating the precepts of refuge
 - 2'' Amassing the collection of merit
 - 3'' Purifying your attitude
 - b'' Actual ritual
 - c'' The conclusion of the ritual



- iv) **How to adopt the spirit of enlightenment through its ritual**
The Great Elder said:⁸⁰

Those who wish to train after they generate the spirit of enlightenment
Cultivate with effort for a long time
The four bases of Brahmā—love, and so on.⁸¹
Thereby they clear away attachment and jealousy
And produce the spirit of enlightenment through the correct ritual.

Once you have trained your mind in this way and have firm certainty about developing the spirit of enlightenment, take part in the ritual for adopting it.

The explanation of how to adopt the spirit of enlightenment through its ritual has three parts:

1. Attaining that which you have not attained
2. Maintaining and not weakening what you have attained (Chapter 6)
3. The method of repairing the spirit of enlightenment if you do weaken it (Chapter 6)

a' Attaining that which you have not attained

Attaining the spirit of enlightenment which you have not attained has three parts:

1. The person before whom you adopt the spirit of enlightenment
2. The persons who adopt the spirit of enlightenment
3. How to take part in the ritual of adopting the spirit of enlightenment

1' The person before whom you adopt the spirit of enlightenment

Aside from saying in his *Stages of the Activities of the Guru* (*Gurukriyā-krama*)⁸² that the person before whom you adopt the spirit of enlightenment should be “a master who is qualified,” the Great Elder did not elucidate any further. Former teachers asserted that it was not sufficient for the person before whom you adopt the spirit of enlightenment just to have the aspirational spirit of enlightenment and to be maintaining its precepts, but he or she must have the vows of the engaged spirit of enlightenment. This accords with Jetāri, who said, “After you have come before a teacher who has the bodhisattva vows....”⁸³ The *Ten Teaching Sūtra* (*Daśa-dharmaka-sūtra*) mentions⁸⁴ *śrāvakas* within the context of generating the spirit of enlightenment after others have exhorted some persons to adopt it. This is said in reference to persons being exhorted by others to adopt the spirit of enlightenment after *śrāvakas* have encouraged them and created in them a sense of disenchantment with cyclic existence. The *śrāvakas* do not perform the ritual.

2' The persons who adopt the spirit of enlightenment

In general, as Jetāri said,⁸⁵ the persons who adopt the spirit of enlightenment are “sons or daughters of good lineage who are sound

the excellent method of becoming a buddha. As *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds* states:¹¹⁸

Reflecting for many eons, the Master of the Sages
Saw this alone to be beneficial.

b'' The training in the precept to generate the spirit of enlightenment six times each day in order to increase the actual spirit of enlightenment

The training in the precept to generate the spirit of enlightenment six times each day has two parts:

1. Not giving up your development of the aspirational spirit
2. The training to increase the aspirational spirit of enlightenment

1'' Not giving up your development of the aspirational spirit of enlightenment

You have taken as your witness the buddhas, bodhisattvas, and teachers and, in their presence, committed yourself to liberate all beings who are not liberated, and so forth. If you then see that living beings are so numerous and their behavior is mean, or that the time wherein you must strive for many eons is long, or that you must train in the two collections that are limitless and difficult to do, and you take this as a reason to become discouraged and to abandon your responsibility to develop the spirit of enlightenment, it is a sin greater than a cardinal transgression of the vows of individual liberation. [330] *The Verse Summary of the Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines* states:¹¹⁹

Though you practice the ten virtuous actions for ten million
eons,
If you then generate the wish to become a *pratyekabuddha* arhat,
You damage and weaken your ethical discipline as a
bodhisattva.
This breach of the spirit of enlightenment is far more serious
than a cardinal transgression.

Thus it says that such a bodhisattva's ethical discipline is faulty. Restraint from *śrāvaka* and *pratyekabuddha* considerations is the bodhisattvas' highest ethical discipline, so were bodhisattvas to weaken this restraint, they would destroy their ethical discipline. For, if bodhisattvas do not cast aside such restraint, then even were they to indulge in sensory pleasures, they would not destroy the

attitude of restraint that is unique to the bodhisattva. Again, the *Verse Summary of the Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines* states:¹²⁰

Though bodhisattvas enjoy the five sensory objects,
If they take refuge in the Buddha, the teaching, and the
community of noble beings,
And fix their minds on omniscience, thinking, “I will attain
buddhahood,”
Understand that these adepts keep the perfection of ethical
discipline.

If they give up their promised intention, they must wander for a long time in miserable rebirths. *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds* says:¹²¹

It is said that once people decide
To give a small amount of a simple thing
And then do not give it,
They cause themselves rebirth as a hungry ghost.

So how could you be reborn in a happy realm
If you deceive all living beings
After you have sincerely invited them
To unsurpassed bliss?

Therefore it also says:

Like a blind person finding a jewel
In a heap of garbage,
By chance the spirit of enlightenment
Has arisen in me.

Think, “How very wonderful that I have attained something like this,” and never give it up. Devoting particular attention to this, vow over and over not to give it up for even an instant.

2” The training to increase the aspirational spirit of enlightenment

It is not enough merely not to give up the aspirational spirit of enlightenment; increase it with great effort three times during the day and three times at night. If you can practice the aforementioned extensive ritual, do so. [331] If not, visualize the field for accumulating merit and, after you make offerings, refine your love, compassion, and so forth. Then adopt the spirit of enlightenment six times, reciting the following ritual verse three times on each occasion:¹²²

I go for refuge until enlightenment
To the Buddha, the teaching and the community;
By the merit of practicing the six perfections
May I achieve buddhahood in order to help living beings.

c'' The training in the precept not to mentally abandon the living beings for whose sake you develop the spirit of enlightenment

Although this precept is not found in the pertinent sections of the *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment* or *Ritual Procedures for the Spirit of Enlightenment and the Bodhisattva Vows*, in his *Commentary on the Difficult Points of the "Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment,"* Atisha says:¹²³

By caring for and not abandoning living beings you maintain the spirit of enlightenment for the sake of its object, its benefits, the ritual for generating it, its general increase, and not forgetting it.

It is listed in this context and does not contradict the intended meaning of the root text so train in this also.

The measure of mentally abandoning living beings is when you produce the thought, "Now I will never work for this person's welfare," based upon some conditions such as unacceptable actions, etc.

d'' The training in the precept to accumulate the collections of merit and sublime wisdom

After you have adopted the aspirational spirit of enlightenment through its ritual, strive daily to accumulate the collections—making offerings to the three jewels, etc.—in order to increase the spirit of enlightenment. Although I have seen no authoritative source for this being a precept other than former teachers' statements, it is nevertheless very beneficial.

2' The training in the precepts that cause you to not separate from your spirit of enlightenment in future lifetimes as well

The training in the precepts that cause you to not separate from your spirit of enlightenment in future lifetimes as well has two sections:

1. The training in the precept to eliminate the four dark practices which weaken the spirit of enlightenment
2. The training in the precept to adopt the four light practices which keep the spirit of enlightenment from weakening

attain the superknowledges should observe the precepts," these precepts are not specific to the spirit of enlightenment, so I have not written about them here.

Thus, my own position is that, with the exception of the precepts not to relinquish the aspirational spirit of enlightenment and not to mentally abandon living beings, breaking the precepts does not constitute a transgression relative to the spirit of enlightenment until you receive the bodhisattva vows. Nevertheless, if you break the precepts, you break the precept that comes with your commitment to virtue in the interim before you take the bodhisattva vows; you therefore commit a misdeed, and you should make a confession with the four powers.¹⁴³ After you receive the bodhisattva vows, breaking these precepts is a transgression that now breaks the precepts which come with these vows. [340] Since it is a transgression, it is sufficient that you repair it in the manner in which you have been instructed, a procedure that is included in the precepts for the engaged spirit of enlightenment, and not anywhere else. However, generating the spirit of enlightenment six times a day is the one precept specific to the aspirational spirit of enlightenment.

7

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SIX PERFECTIONS

- c) How to learn the bodhisattva deeds after developing the spirit of enlightenment
 - i) The reason why you must learn the trainings after developing the spirit of enlightenment
 - ii) Demonstrating that you will not become a buddha by learning either method or wisdom separately



c) How to learn the bodhisattva deeds after developing the spirit of enlightenment

How to learn the bodhisattva deeds after developing the spirit of enlightenment has three parts:

1. The reason why you must learn the trainings after developing the spirit of enlightenment
2. Demonstrating that you will not become a buddha by learning either method or wisdom separately
3. Explanation of the process of learning the precepts (Chapters 8 and on)

i) The reason why you must learn the trainings after developing the spirit of enlightenment

It is indeed the case that great benefit comes from mere development of the aspirational spirit of enlightenment without learning the trainings of generosity and so forth. Consider in this regard the passage from the *Life of Maitreya* cited earlier.¹⁴⁴ However, you still

have to practice the bodhisattva trainings. If you do not emphasize this practice, you will never become a buddha. So learn the bodhisattva deeds. Thus the *Foremost of Gayā* says:¹⁴⁵

Enlightenment is for great bodhisattvas who take practice to heart,
but not for those who take a wrong practice to heart.

And the *King of Concentrations Sūtra* also says:¹⁴⁶

Therefore take practice to heart. Why? O Prince, because when
you take practice to heart, perfect enlightenment is not hard to
attain.

“Practice” means the method of achieving buddhahood, i.e., learning the bodhisattva trainings. The first *Stages of Meditation* also says:¹⁴⁷

The bodhisattvas, who have thus developed the spirit of enlightenment, understand that without disciplining themselves they cannot discipline others and so involve themselves in the practice of generosity and so forth; without practice they will not attain enlightenment.

And Dharmakīrti’s *Commentary on the “Compendium of Valid Cognition”* says:¹⁴⁸

In order to destroy suffering, the compassionate
Work at actualizing the methods; [341]
It is hard for them to explain the methods and their results
When these remain hidden to them.

Those who have great compassion for others feel the need to relieve others’ suffering. To relieve it, the kind thought, “May they be free of their suffering,” is not enough; they must engage in the methods that will bring it about. Now, if they do not first engage in those methods themselves, they will be unable to free others. Therefore, if you want to work for others’ welfare, you must first discipline yourself. In reference to this the *King of Concentrations Sūtra* says that you should “take practice to heart.” Practice is said to be learning the training in the precepts associated with the bodhisattva vows after you have taken them. Therefore, it is very important that you are not mistaken about just what is entailed in taking practice to heart.

ii) **Demonstrating that you will not become a buddha by learning either method or wisdom separately**

It is not enough just to want to attain buddhahood; you must engage in the method of achieving it. This method has to be

eons of a bodhisattva's practice of generosity, observance of ethical discipline, etc. would be an exercise in faulty wisdom that did not comprehend the definitive, as the Bhagavan says in the *Sūtra Gathering All the Threads* (*Sarva-vaidalya-saṃgraha-sūtra*):¹⁶¹

Maitreya, fools intending to repudiate the other perfections will speak thus about the bodhisattvas' correct practice of the six perfections for the sake of perfect enlightenment: "Bodhisattvas should train in perfect wisdom alone, the remaining perfections have no use." Ajita [Maitreya], what do you think? Was he who was the king of Kāśi [Śākyamuni Buddha in a previous life] exercising faulty wisdom when he gave his own flesh to the hawk for the sake of the pigeon?

Maitreya replied, "No, Bhagavan, he was not."

The Bhagavan continued, "Maitreya, when I was performing the deeds of a bodhisattva, did the roots of virtue that I accumulated—the roots of virtue that go with the six perfections—harm me?"

Maitreya replied, "No, Bhagavan, they did not."

The Bhagavan continued, "Ajita, you have so far practiced the perfection of generosity over sixty eons, you have practiced the perfection of ethical discipline over sixty eons, the perfection of patience over sixty eons, the perfection of joyous perseverance over sixty eons, the perfection of meditative stabilization over sixty eons, and the perfection of wisdom over sixty eons, in regard to which these fools will say that enlightenment is only reached through a single way—the way of emptiness. [347] Their deeds will be completely impure.

Therefore, to say "It is unnecessary for someone who knows emptiness to strive hard to cultivate method" is a mistaken denial that states, in effect, "The period of Our Teacher's previous holy lifetimes was a time when he had no understanding of the definitive."

Opponents' position: Practicing the deeds of generosity and so forth in a variety of ways is for when you do not have a firm knowledge of emptiness. When you do have this firm knowledge, then this is enough.

Reply: This is a very wrong view. If it were correct, then the children of the conquerors who have ascended to the great levels where they have attained the nonconceptual sublime wisdom that perceives the ultimate truth, and, in particular, the eighth-level bodhisattvas, who have control over nonconceptual wisdom, would not need the bodhisattva deeds. This is incorrect because the *Sūtra on the Ten Levels* (*Daśa-bhūmika-sūtra*) says that even though on each

of the ten levels there is an emphasis on one of the deeds—generosity, etc.—it is not the case that they do not perform the other deeds, so it is said that they practice all six or ten perfections on each level. Further, since Ajita [Maitreya], Nāgārjuna, and Asaṅga explain the meaning of these sūtras in this fashion, it is not possible to interpret them otherwise.

In particular, bodhisattvas eliminate all afflictions on the eighth level. Therefore, when they stabilize on the ultimate, wherein they have quelled all elaboration, the buddhas exhort them, explaining that they have to train in the bodhisattva deeds: “With just this knowledge of emptiness you cannot become enlightened because the *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* have also obtained this nonconceptuality. Look at my immeasurable body, immeasurable sublime wisdom, immeasurable realm, and so forth. You also do not have my powers and so on. Joyously persevere for the sake of these attributes. Think about the living beings not at peace, disturbed by various afflictions. But do not discard this forbearance [meditation on emptiness],” and so forth. [348] To be satisfied with a certain, trivial meditative concentration and to set aside everything else is something ridiculed by scholars. The *Sūtra on the Ten Levels* says:¹⁶²

Listen! There are children of the conquerors, bodhisattvas, who abide in this bodhisattva’s immovable level [eighth level], who have generated the power of previous aspirational prayers, and who are stabilized in the “stream of entrance to the teaching” meditation [meditation on emptiness]. The *bhagavan* buddhas have them accomplish a *tathāgata*’s sublime wisdom, saying this: “Children of good lineage, very good, very good! This goal—the knowledge of all the buddha qualities—is a forbearance of the ultimate. Nevertheless, you do not have my ten powers, fearlessnesses, and so forth, the buddha qualities in all their richness. Joyously persevere at seeking these perfected qualities of a buddha. Do not throw away this very entrance to forbearance [meditation on emptiness]. Children of good lineage, though you have thus attained peace and liberation, think about the ordinary, childish beings, who are not at peace and are driven by various upsurges of diverse afflictions. Children of good lineage, recollect your earlier aspirational prayers, what you should attain for the welfare of living beings, and the inestimable entrance to sublime wisdom. Also, children of good lineage, this is the reality of phenomena. Whether there are *tathāgatas* or not, the sphere of reality simply remains; it is the emptiness of all phenomena, the non-apprehension of all things. Not by this alone are the *tathāgatas*

to be distinguished; all *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* also attain this nonconceptual real nature. [349] Also, children of good lineage, look at my immeasurable body, my immeasurable sublime wisdom, my immeasurable buddha-realm, my immeasurable actualization of sublime wisdom, my immeasurable halo of light, and the immeasurable pure modulations of my voice—and produce something similar in yourselves.”

The *Sūtra on the Ten Levels* also gives the example of a ship sailing out to sea, driven by a favorable wind.¹⁶³ The distance it covers in a single day exceeds the distance it goes even in a hundred years after starting from port without a wind and using effort to move it. Likewise, it says, after you have reached the eighth level, without a great effort you cover in just a moment an amount of the path to omniscience not possible before reaching this level, even if you were to strive at the path for one hundred thousand eons. You fool yourself, therefore, by saying “I have a shortcut,” and then not learning the bodhisattva deeds.

Opponents’ position: I do not assert that generosity and so forth are unnecessary, but rather that they are fully present in the state of mind that lacks any thought, because the absence of adherence to a giver, gift, and recipient makes non-apprehending generosity fully present, and in the same way the remaining perfections are fully present, too. It is also because the sūtras say that you include the practice of all six perfections within the practice of each.

Reply: If they are fully present in a state of mind that lacks thought, then when non-Buddhist meditators are in meditative equipoise even in single-pointed states of serenity, all the perfections would be fully present because they also are not adhering to a giver, gift, and recipient. In particular, when *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* nonconceptually perceive the real nature, as in the earlier quotation from the *Sūtra on the Ten Levels*, all bodhisattva deeds would be fully present—so they would, absurdly, be Mahāyāna practitioners. And if you assert that just one practice is sufficient because the sūtras say that all six perfections are included in each, well then, since it also says all six are present even when offering a maṇḍala while reciting the verse beginning, “Giving cow dung together with water...,” it would also be enough to do only this. [350]

Deeds imbued with the philosophical view and wisdom imbued with method may be understood by way of an analogy. When a mother stricken with grief at the death of her beloved child engages

the miserable realms; training in the practice of going for refuge; thinking how a certain action gives rise to a certain result; training in love, compassion, and the spirit of enlightenment; and practicing the precepts of the engaged spirit of enlightenment? Since all of these paths require only that you induce certain knowledge by thinking, “This is this,” “This comes from that,” “This has this good quality or that fault,” you would increase your conception of a self of objects commensurate to your certainty about these paths. Conversely, you would become less certain about these paths commensurate to the certain knowledge of the selflessness of objects you could sustain in meditation. The deeds component and view component would thus become mutually exclusive, like hot and cold, and you would then never develop a long-lasting and very forceful certainty about both the view and deeds.

Therefore, just as in the context of the goal there is no contradiction that a buddha’s embodiment of truth and a buddha’s embodiment of form are both presented as attainments, so on the path you must induce without any contradiction (1) certain knowledge of the total freedom from any elaboration of the conception of signs of true existence in the two kinds of self with respect to even a particle of a mental object and (2) certain knowledge that “This comes from that,” and “This has this good quality or that fault.” This, in turn, is contingent on how you determine the two truths, the philosophical view of what exists. You are counted “a person who knows the two truths and who has found the Conqueror’s intent” if you are convinced that the following two valid cognitions not only do not, of course, harm each other, but rather aid each other: (1) the valid cognition that establishes the ultimate, which is determined through scripture and reasoning to be the absence of even a particle of essential nature in the way of being or ontological status of any phenomenon of cyclic existence or nirvāṇa, and (2) the conventional valid cognition that establishes that causes and effects, in their diverse workings, are certain, without any confusion of even the slightest cause or effect. [353] I shall explain this system in the insight section.¹⁶⁸

As to the third scriptural passage, the one from the *Sūtra Requested by Brahmā*, since the context for this passage in the sūtra is an analysis of production and so forth, in order to teach that generosity, etc. are not absolutely produced, it uses the term “conceptual thought” to indicate that they are mere imputations by conceptual thought. It is not teaching that you should not involve yourself in these deeds and reject them.

Therefore, since there is no time when it is not necessary to practice these deeds—the six perfections, etc.—until you become a buddha, it is incumbent upon you to train in these deeds. If you strive right now from the depths of your heart, you will accomplish with effort what you can achieve. With respect to the practices that you are unable to do for the time being, make an aspiration to do them and, as causes of the ability to practice them, accumulate the collections, clear away the obscurations, and make many aspirational prayers. Once you do this, it will not be long before you put them into practice. Otherwise, if you take the position that you, personally, cannot understand the deeds or cannot do them, and you then say to others, “You do not need to train in them,” not only do you ruin yourself and bring ruin on others as well, but it also becomes a condition for the decline of the teaching. So do not do this. As Nāgārjuna’s *Compendium of Sūtras* (*Sūtra-samuccaya*) says:¹⁶⁹

Discerning even the non-composite and still being disillusioned with composite virtue is demonic activity. Understanding even the path to enlightenment and still not seeking the path of the perfections is demonic activity.

And also:

A bodhisattva who lacks skill-in-means should not strive for the state of profound reality.

And the *Sūtra of Showing the Tathāgata’s Inconceivable Secret* says:¹⁷⁰

Children of good lineage, it is like this. Fire, for example, burns from a cause and goes out when this cause ceases to exist. Similarly, mind is activated by an observed object; without this it is inactive. The bodhisattvas with this skill-in-means know, through the purity of their perfection of wisdom, the elimination of a truly existent observed object, and yet they do not eliminate the observation of roots of virtue. [354] They do not give rise to the observation of the afflictions and yet set their attention on the observed objects of the perfections. They discern an observation of emptiness, yet still observe and consider all living beings with great compassion.

You must distinguish between explanations of how there is no observed object and explanations of how there is an observed object.

Accordingly, while you must loosen the bonds of the afflictions and the conceptions of signs of true existence, you must be firmly bound by the rope of ethical training, and, while you need to eradicate

both kinds of misdeeds [deeds that are wrong by nature and deeds that are wrong by prohibition], you must not eradicate virtuous activities. Being bound by ethical training and being bound by conceiving signs of true existence are not the same, and loosening the safeguarding of vows and loosening the chain of the conception of self are not the same either.

You achieve omniscience from a number of causes, each of which is insufficient by itself. So know that the following sort of person is a teacher of nonvirtue who blocks the door to the two collections: someone who says, “Hundreds of birds are driven out with a single stone from a slingshot,” and who attains a fortunate life of leisure and should then take advantage of it in many ways, but rather does not train in anything other than one specific aspect of the path.

Also, the difference between the Hinayāna or Mahāyāna comes down to whether its practitioners train in the limitless collections at the time of putting the teachings into practice, because the “modest vehicle” and Hinayāna are synonymous, and the meaning of “modest” is “partial.” You must achieve even lesser, current results—food, drink, and the like—through many causes and conditions, so it is quite wrong to hold that something partial is sufficient to achieve a person’s highest purpose, buddhahood, for it is the nature of dependent-arising that results are made in accordance with their causes. With this in mind the Buddha said in the *Lotus of Compassion Sūtra* (*Karuṇā-puṇḍarīka-sūtra*) that something partial comes from what is partial, and something total comes from what is total. [355] This is explained at length in the *Sūtra on the Coming Forth of the Tathāgatas* (*Tathāgatotpatti-saṃbhava*):¹⁷¹

None of the *tathāgatas* arose from a single cause. Why? O conquerors’ children! *Tathāgatas* are established from ten times one hundred thousand immeasurable establishing causes. What are the ten? They are these: the genuine cause of not being satisfied with the immeasurable collections of merit and sublime wisdom....

This is also explained at length in the *Teaching of Vimalakīrti*:¹⁷²

O friends! The bodies of *tathāgatas* are produced from hundreds of meritorious deeds, from all virtues, from immeasurable virtuous paths....

And the protector Nāgārjuna also says in his *Precious Garland*:¹⁷³

When the causes of even a buddha’s embodiment of form
Have no measure, as with the world,
How then could there be a measure
Of the causes of the embodiment of truth?

This training in method and wisdom comprising the six perfections is, as explained earlier, common to both the mantra and perfection vehicles. For in many of the tantric classics we find repeated mention of the complete path of the perfections—the six perfections, the thirty-seven branches of enlightenment, the sixteen emptinesses, etc.—in the context of explanations that the entire celestial mansion and the array of resident deities are the inner qualities of mind. Therefore, know that all the Perfection of Wisdom literature's explanations about what is to be adopted and what is to be discarded are comprehensively shared with the mantra vehicle, except in the case of the tantric teachings for certain exceptional persons in which they must take the experience of sensory objects as the path, and so forth.

Take the above explanation as a seed and reflect on it well. If you are not then certain about a path that is not just partial but complete in all aspects, you have not comprehended the foundation of the Mahāyāna path in general. Therefore, intelligent ones, generate a solid certainty about this path of method and wisdom and, in many ways, continuously grow in your natural capacity for the supreme vehicle. [356]

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